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C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 000462

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/25/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [KDEM](#) [GV](#)  
SUBJECT: FORMER PRESIDENTIAL OFFICIAL UNDER INVESTIGATION  
FOR CORRUPTION

REF: A. CONAKRY 0452  
[1](#)B. CONAKRY 0460

Classified By: A/DCM SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

[1](#)1. (SBU) The former Chief of Protocol at the Presidency, Idrissa Thiam, is reportedly under investigation for embezzlement. Commonly viewed as the most powerful individual next to the president prior to his controversial dismissal earlier this month, Thiam joins colleague Sam Soumah (former Secretary General of the Presidency) to face allegations of corruption. (COMMENT. Soumah was arrested last week and then released the same day upon order of the president - reftel. END COMMENT).

[1](#)2. (U) A local internet news site (Guineenews.com) reported on August 21 that Thiam is under investigation for the disappearance of \$6 million related to a debt reconversion agreement between the Kuwaiti company, Ashanti Goldfield, and the Guinean Government. According to the article, Thiam deposited the funds into a special account he created under the president's umbrella, entitled "Ashanti Service," but for which Thiam was the sole authorized signatory. The author states that the lawyers in charge of the investigation maintain that the only way Thiam would have been able to set up such an account was if he had forged the president's signature.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The newly appointed Judicial Advisor at the Presidency, Mr. Mounjour Cheriff, told RSO LES that the Judicial Police are conducting an ongoing investigation into Thiam's activities, but that no warrant for his arrest has been issued. A contact at the Judicial Police told RSO LES that Thiam is scheduled for a hearing before the court on August 26 at 10:00.

[1](#)4. (C) During a meeting with the Charge on August 22, the new Minister Secretary General of the Presidency, Alpha Ibrahima Keira, said that Thiam is in trouble for falsifying presidential decrees (reftel B).

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COMMENT  
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[1](#)5. (C) Thiam is also accused of having set up multiple bank accounts in Conakry, Dakar, Paris, New York, and Washington. If the allegations against Soumah and Thiam are true, the pair of them may have conceivably siphoned off millions of dollars, if not tens of millions. However, the president's quick intervention in Soumah's case suggests that he may prevent the government from pursuing any corruption cases against his old friends. The president's intervention in the corruption case against controversial millionaire Mamadou Syllah sparked widespread civil unrest in early 2007. END COMMENT.  
BROKENSHIRE